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SUBJECT: Media Reaction - Israel and Palestinian Refugees

On May 7, the independent liberal Stockholm morning daily "Dagens Nyheter" in a signed editorial by Per Jonsson commented on the 60th anniversary of Israel and the situation of the of Palestinian refugees. It was headlined "To Learn From Israel", and said:

"Against the background of the Palestinian refugee disaster there is an aspect of the establishment of Israel that is worth pondering.

"The fact (is) that more Jews than Palestinian Arabs - slightly more than 850,000 - were forced to give up homes and property in the surrounding Arab states, primarily during the years 1948-1950....

"One third of them were received in Europe, Latin America, and North America. Two thirds of them were absorbed by Israel, where the authorities managed to integrate them into society....

"One can compare them to their unfairly treated Palestinian brothers and sisters....

"The neighboring Arab states, with the exception of Jordan, have done practically nothing to integrate Palestinian refugees in their societies...Instead, the Arab governments have deliberately made permanent their refugee status....

"The refugees have quite simply been used as pawns in the political conflict between the Arab states and Israel.

"But now it is high time to put an end to this systematic maltreatment of human beings. The EU, the UN, as well as individual states should forcefully urge Arab governments - including the Palestinian authority - to actively take care of those Palestinian refugees who for decades have languished in camps, and give them full citizenship....

"Palestinians in exile are one of the most inflammatory ingredients of the Middle East conflict. To integrate them in the societies where they reside - as one did for Jewish refugees in Israel - is one of the most urgent matters that can be dealt with to help solve the conflict in the long run. In this regard everyone has something to learn from Israel."

WOOD